

THE KERMAJUPPO EXPERIENCE
- A PLACE PROPOSAL -

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Artistic Outcome of the Master Thesis

CULTURAL HERITAGE MEETS PLACE-SPECIFIC ART

Identifying, Understanding and Representing Kermajuppo

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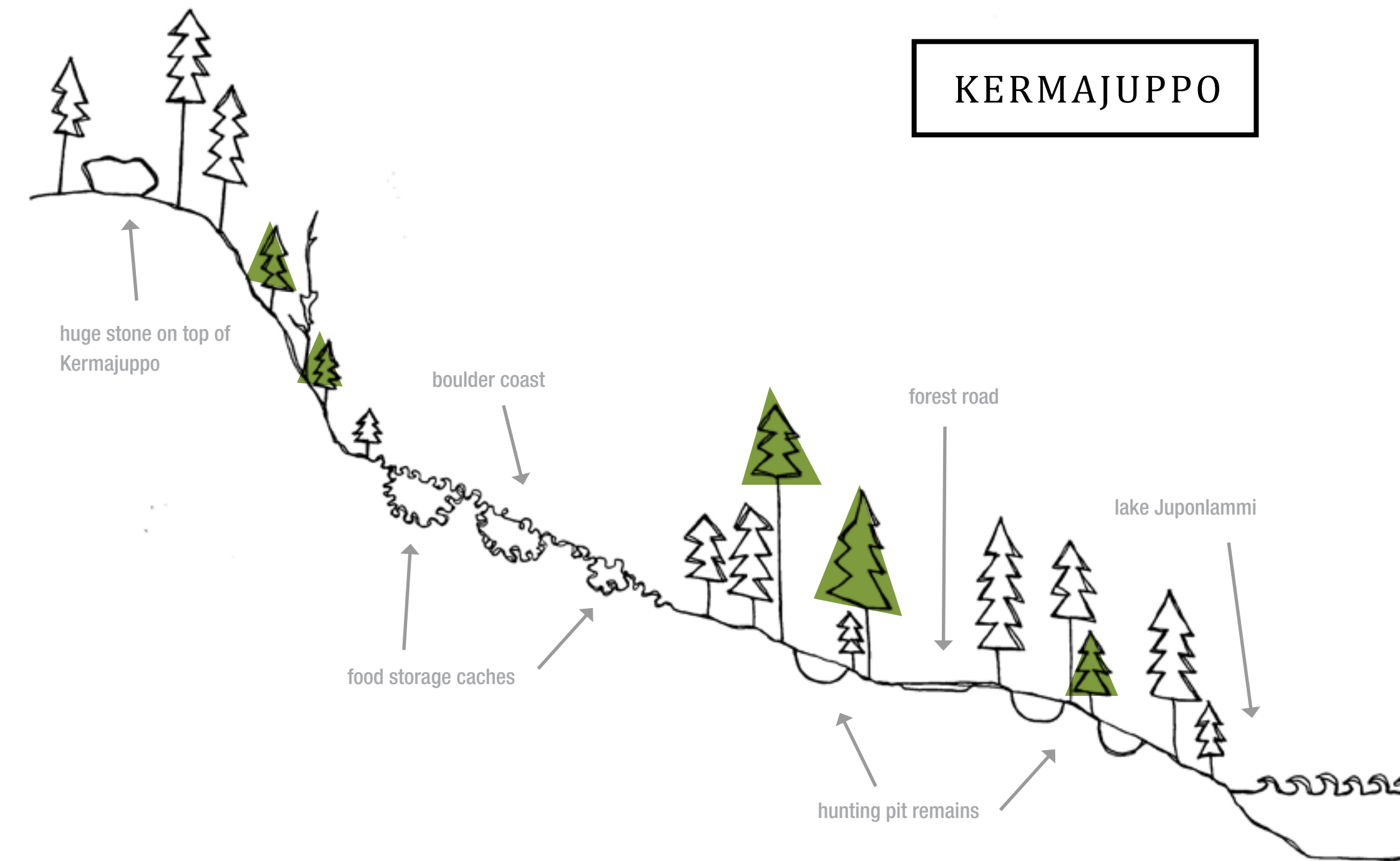
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In Finnish Lapland, between Rovaniemi and Raanujärvi, the almost unremarkable hill Kermajuppo stands above the lake Juponlammi. When looking more closely at the area however, it will reveal its extraordinary features. Kermajuppo is venue of something special and ancient. Visible remains of wild forest deer hunting pits and food storage caches from a long-gone livelihood and the northern hunting culture of the Sámi people. A magical place, where historical air is blowing all around and takes your thoughts and body far away into the past. Kermajuppo and its cultural heritage is a place of great value and importance. In the past, its surrounding nature, the forest, its characteristics and denizens have been a vital part for the survival of its inhabitants. With the start of domestication, Kermajuppo's usage ended but the place continued to be a symbol for the reindeer herders hunting past.



Besides the hunting and gathering history, the place can be seen as a connection point between history, nature, environment, animals, culture and livelihood. Even if all what remains are some parts of holes dug in the ground, the whole area has a much deeper meaning. It represents the relationship between animal and human, man-made things and nature, survival and death.

The artistic part of my research study provides ideas and suggestions for Kermajuppo's maintenance and representation. It identifies key issues and serves as a detailed place-specific culturally and sustainable development proposal.

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A Hunter’s Bestiary

Song 1

*Voi voi voi
la la la
lu lu lu
fam fam fam
huo huo huo*

Then he goes like this
when he is full up:
*huo huo huo
vuoa vuoa vuoa*

Then he goes like this
when he eats reindeer
and when he has time
he begins to sing:
uoa uoa uoa

When he stops howling
he lopes across the
forests and the firths
and the Fox just keeps
an eye on the wolf’s
footprints, and he eats
and goes after him.

When he has eaten
he goes off again
and begins to bark:
uvea uvea uvea

That is his note when
he has had enough
thanking his holy
brother for is toil
for a bellyful.

IDENTITY



LOGO



On the steep hillside and partly on the boulder coast of Kermajuppo, many white, twisted and dead trees are lying on the ground. The branches and trunks are traversed by curved lines which create fascinating structures and forms. Those beautiful tree remains became inspiration for an individual sign that could represent Kermajuppo to the world.

The past inhabitants of Kermajuppo, could build relationship-like bonding's with nature by just listening and observing their environment closely, knowing when it is time to step back or when it is appropriate to interfere. A constant dialogue through taking and giving. With the history and livelihood of the hunters and gatherers in mind, a symbol started to develop that illustrates the relationship of humans with nature as well as portraying the lines of the white, twisted, dead trees.

A logo for Kermajuppo can be an advantage for its appearance and recognition. First contact with the place will most likely be through information about its existence in brochures or websites. How much people are getting interested in visiting however, depends to an extent on its appearance in the just mentioned communication media. With a suitable logo and identity, Kermajuppo could gain the value of brand recognition, look more appealing and will be easier to remember.

The idea is to communicate already beforehand parts of Kermajuppo's essence to capture people's imagination. It will be also interesting for the visitors to discover forms of the logo also during their stay at Kermajuppo. From the first word, to the travel until the actual visit, everything could be part of a greater whole that offers people a continuously thought through experience.

HAND IN HAND



TAKING AND GIVING



HUMAN AND NATURE



Song 2

The Arctic Fox too
follows the wolf's tracks
knowing no better.

He has a sharp eye
he has a wide mouth:
he eats like that too.

And he lopes off too
and goes to bed and
he has a long tail.

Song 3

The Hawk, a foe too
eats grouse and feathers
and he kills and eats
and flutters and calls
birr birr birr

Song 4

The Brown Owl, a foe
to little game, calls
under rocks and cliffs
chirr chirr chirr

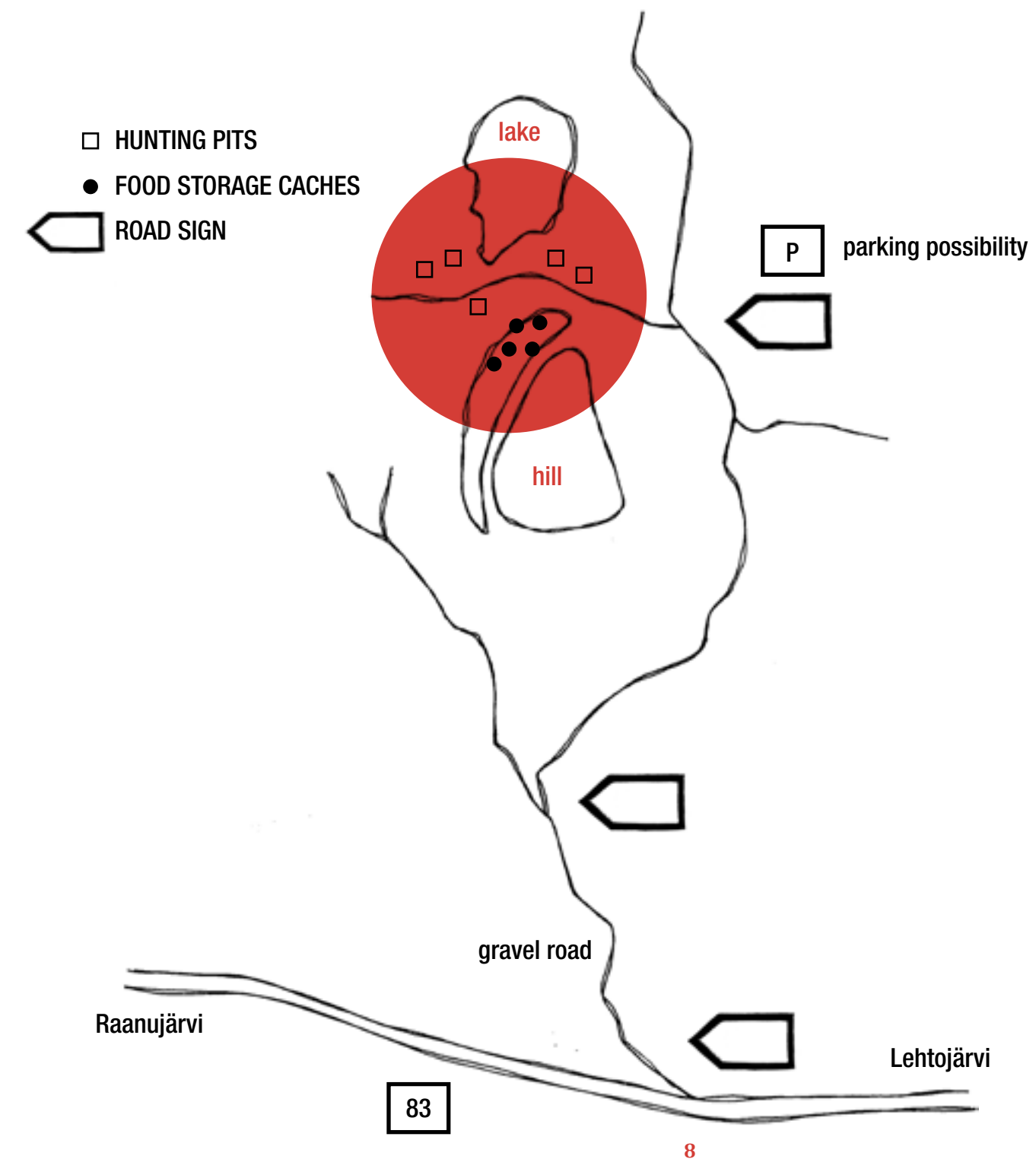
It is the lemmings
the Brown Owl watches
on the ground and calls
which is why the Brown
Owl has a round eye.

ACCESSIBILITY

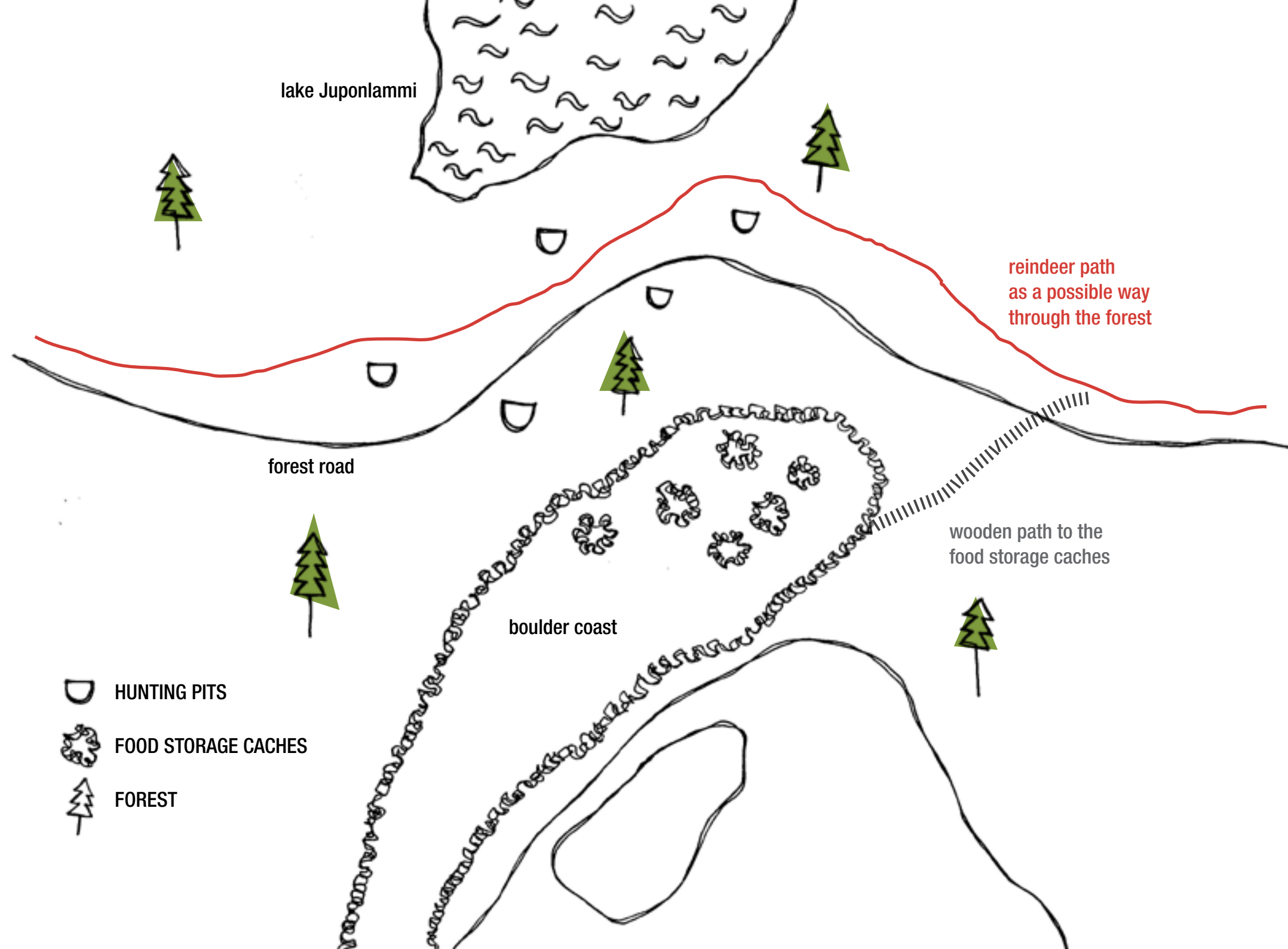




About 10 km before Raanujärvi, a small gravel path on the right side of the main road 83 leads to Kermajuppo and its cultural heritage. It is however, difficult to find as many similar gravel paths appear on the same road. For those who are familiar with the region, a small sign with the name “Kaupinvaara”, (not Kermajuppo) shows the way to the ancient remains. Therefore, a road sign on the right turn from the main road to the small path is of great importance. On the gravel path there are also several turnings where additional signs would be needed as well as on the turn to the hill itself. All signs should be marked with the name Kermajuppo and the logo to assure the right way. Close to Kermajuppo there is a big space on the right side of the path which is ideal for parking up to three cars.



SIGNS AND ROADS

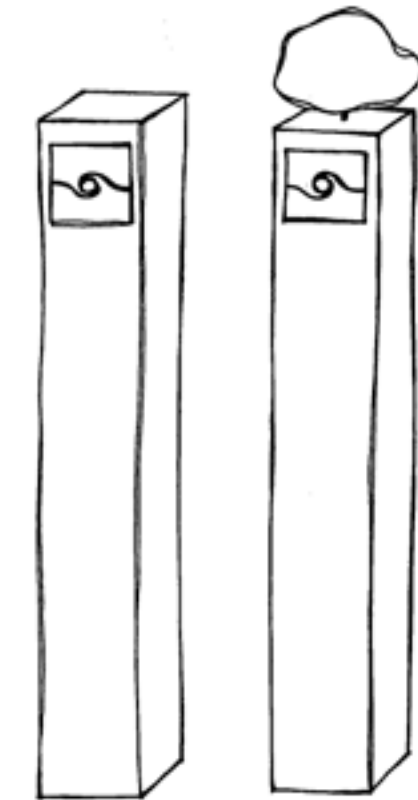


From the parking place, it is a five to ten minutes walk until the hunting pits and food storage caches appear. A little forest road close to the hunting pits already exist. In May 2016, it was very wet but still useable whereas two years later, turned out to be destroyed by huge and heavy forest machinery. The same happened with parts of the forest ground used in 2016 to reach the caches. To access the ancient remains of Kermajuppo, proper maintained roads and paths would be needed.



Inside the forest, small paths have been created by the traveling reindeers for centuries. They are very visible and could be used with additional sign posts to guide the way through the hunting pit area. Wooden and traditional sign posts, marked with the logo of Kermajuppo, should in any case lead the visitors towards the ancient remains. To distinguish the ways, a stone added on top of the post could be leading to the caches whereas a plain one could lead to the hunting pits.

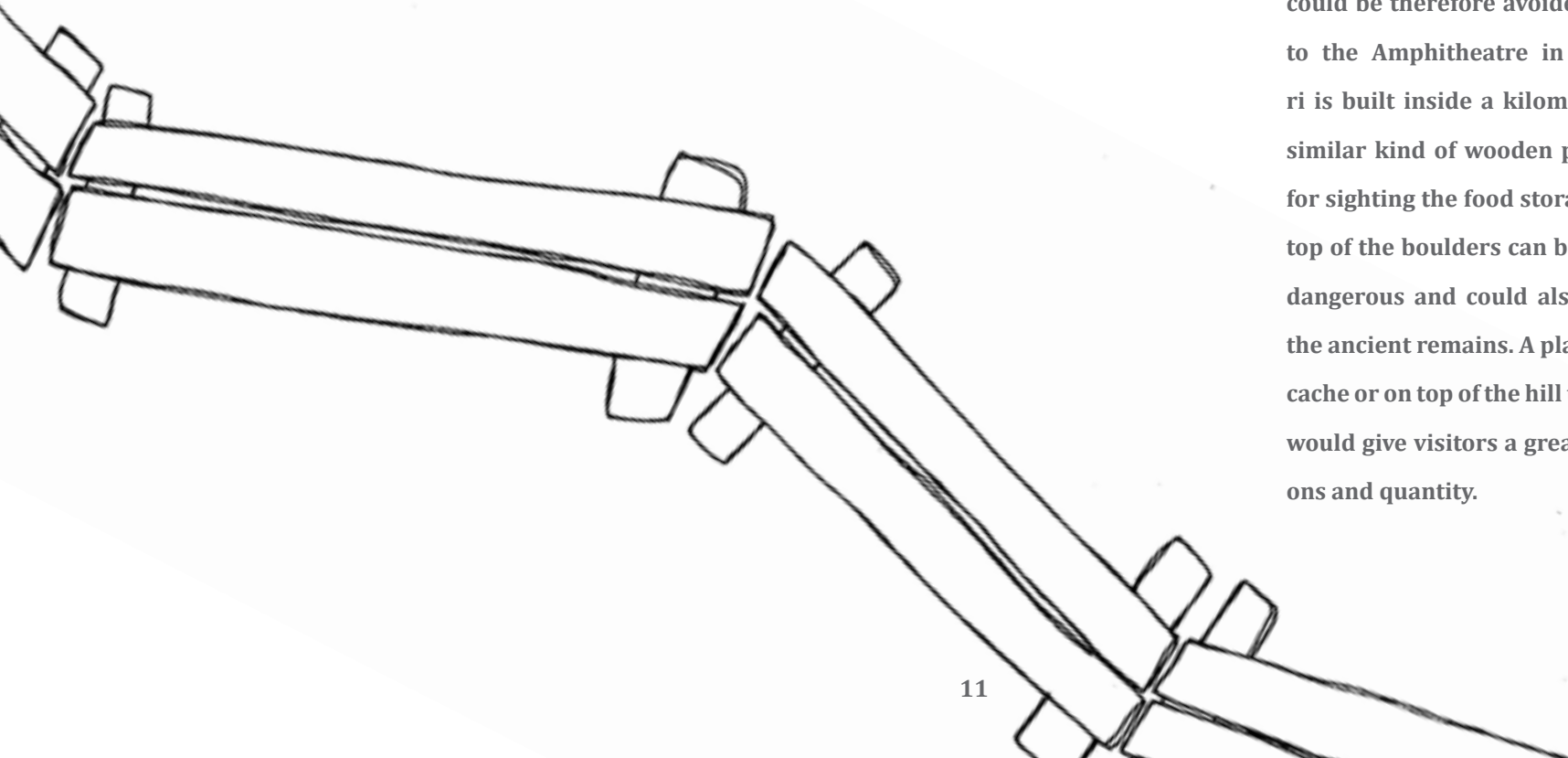
SIGNS AND ROADS





A WOODEN PATH TAKES YOU TO THE PAST

All over Finland wooden paths are guiding people through hiking areas and a similar solution should be offered at Kermajuppo. Wet forest ground, destroyed roads or shaky stones at the boulder coast could be therefore avoided. For example, the way to the Amphitheatre in Aittakuru, Phyhätunturi is built inside a kilometer-long stone valley. A similar kind of wooden path would be beneficial for sighting the food storage caches as walking on top of the boulders can be quite troublesome and dangerous and could also lead to destruction of the ancient remains. A platform around one single cache or on top of the hill to oversee several caches would give visitors a great view on their dimensions and quantity.



COMMUNITY PROJECT

Song 5

The Eagle, a foe
like the others, kills calves,
kills lambs, kills hares
and young water-birds
and he flies and calls
harrm harrm harrm

Song 6

The Wolverine too
stinks and walks about
in the Wolf's tracks. He
is as foul and black
filling his belly
where he comes to eat
and then trotting off
as the chilled Norseman
stinking and singing
irro irro irro

Song 7

Along the sea bed
the Halibut swims:
he is a precious
fish, a big, strong one.

When he takes the hook
even a strong man
can hardly drag him
up into the boat.

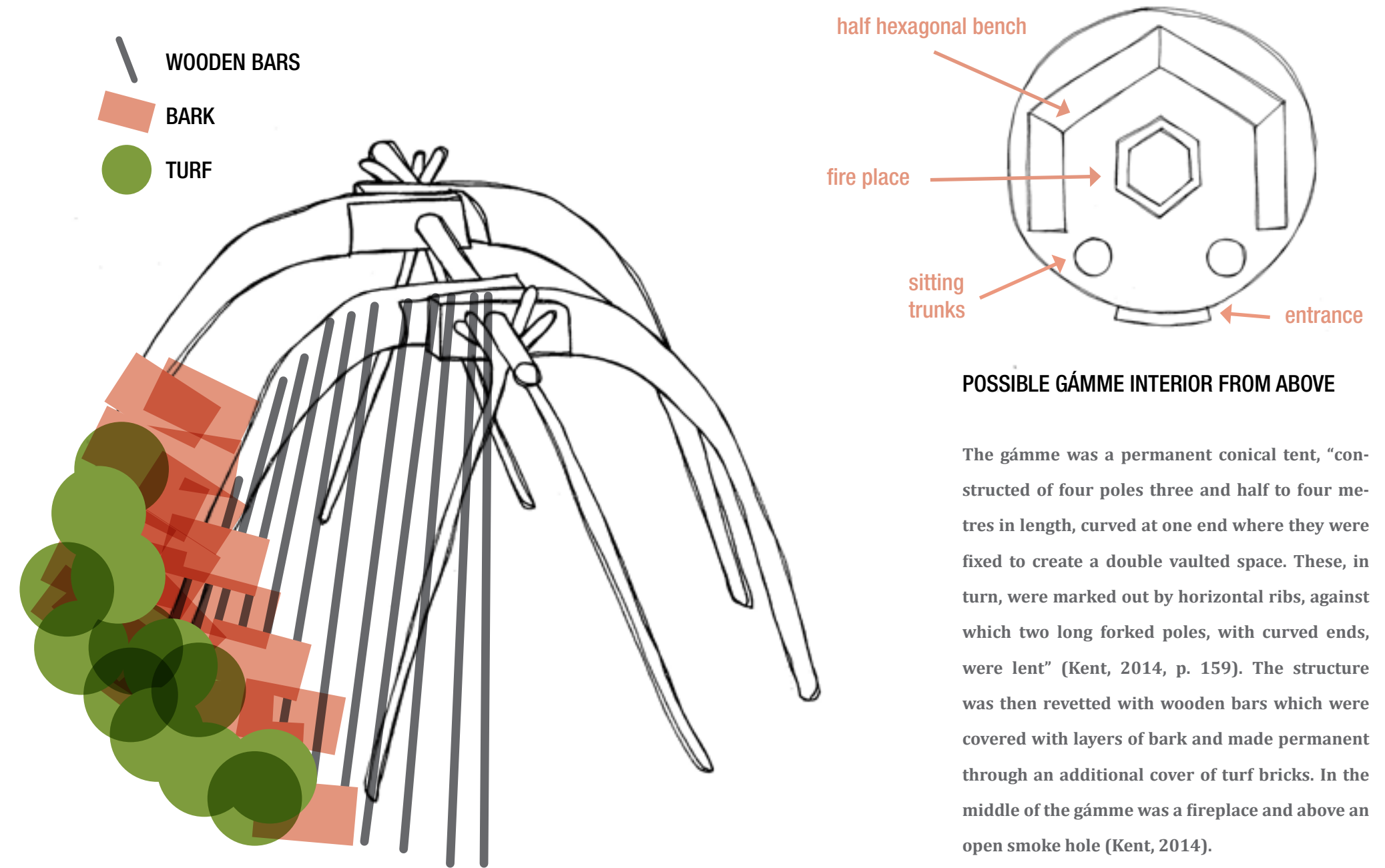


GÁMME



On the website “Kulttuuriympäristön Palveluikkuna” is a page about Kermajuppo with information about the hunting pits and food storage caches. At an inspection in 2009, it has been written, that the community of Raanujärvi was planning a nature and cultural trail for Kermajuppo and during conversations with some villagers, the wish for a Laavu (Finnish word for a fire place with shelter) was expressed as well. Those fire places can also be found all over Finland and offer a great opportunity to pause, enjoy the nature and eat some sausages. On the second visit to Kermajuppo, a self-made, somewhat rundown Laavu appeared close to the lake Juponlammi. It was located at a good spot inside the forest with a nice view over the lake. An evidence that Kermajuppo’s immediate people are longing for a place of rest which emphasized the idea for creating a shelter with a fire place at Kermajuppo.

Instead of the well-known and wide-spread Laavu, Kermajuppo should embellish an ancient place of dwelling. The gámme (Sámi) or kammi (Finnish) is a permanent closed shelter with a fire place inside, which has been used and build by the Sámi people. It fits in the time-frame of Kermajuppo’s usage, will give visitors an insight into the hunter’s livelihood and is built entirely out of natural materials.



POSSIBLE GÁMME INTERIOR FROM ABOVE

The gámme was a permanent conical tent, “constructed of four poles three and half to four metres in length, curved at one end where they were fixed to create a double vaulted space. These, in turn, were marked out by horizontal ribs, against which two long forked poles, with curved ends, were lent” (Kent, 2014, p. 159). The structure was then revetted with wooden bars which were covered with layers of bark and made permanent through an additional cover of turf bricks. In the middle of the gámme was a fireplace and above an open smoke hole (Kent, 2014).



GÁMME

The idea is to build the gámme with the help of the local people and therefore include them actively in the place-specific development of Kermajuppo. The gámme should be planned, constructed and build during a hands-on project with participants from the community of Raanujärvi. The locals are invited to bring in their individual skills, collaborate with each other and share a goal. A community project, that will hopefully engage young and old with their own environment, devote them to their past and create a sense of belonging for the present and future. Through the process of working and achieving something collectively, the participants have the chance to identify themselves more intensively with the work, the place and the community as well as to create a sense of ownership towards the work and Kermajuppo (Kwon, 2002).

The finished gámme should provide visitors of Kermajuppo with a place of dwelling where they can rest, grill some sausages and experience a piece of ancient livelihood.

VISUALISING AND COMMUNICATING HISTORY

Song 8

Along the river
bed the Salmon swims:
he is a strong fish
and precious, swimming
though the river should
traverse all the land -
yes, he makes his way
to the very source
and he turns so black
he changes so much
that he no longer eats,
no, not even
when he is in need.
And then he returns
he comes back downstream
from where he once came
from the open sea
where there are Salmon
galore, and he turns
back to the white hue
which he had before:
only in the sea
with herrings to eat
will he grow once more
as fat and as fine
as he was before.



BALANCE

“Consumption follows killing as birth follows intercourse, and both acts are integral to the reproductive cycles, respectively, of animals and humans.”

Ingold, 2000

RELATIONS

“They view their world as an integrated entity.”

David Bird, 1992

INFORMATION

Information about Kermajuppo’s unique characteristics are important to understand its full relevance. However, what kind of information, where to place it and how much information is needed to not destroy the personal experience of the visitors, are crucial questions to think of.

Historical and place-specific details could be for example placed at limited locations, where it seems appropriate and does not interfere much with peoples personal perceptions and the natural environment of Kermajuppo. Essential keywords with short references, quotes or explanations, could accompany the visitors through the place, offering them small insights into Kermajuppo’s past, usage and essence without taking away too much of its actual presence.

Further information could be located close to the hunting pits or food storage caches in form of a hunting-cycle visualizing the yearly activities of Kermajuppo’s past inhabitants. A map, showing the area and general hunting and gathering information could be placed at the entrance of Kermajuppo as well as information about the ancient livelihood with indication to the community of Raanujärvi at the newly built gámme.

To ensure an authentic and individual experience, not too much should be revealed.

-  TRADE AND TAXES
-  WILD REINDEER HUNTING
-  FISHING
-  BERRY PICKING
-  STORING
-  BEAVER TRAPPING



HUMANIMALS

I only look at you
No harm will be done
The hunting times are over
Let me appreciate your beauty
Animal of the north.



The idea of a place-specific artwork developed after a personal encounter with a reindeer at Kermajuppo. The appearance of the main subject turned back time and brought Kermajuppo back to life. Imaginary scenes from the hunting times and with it, related emotions of anticipation, hope, fear and tension, suddenly emerged. Kermajuppo could be provided with an installation that represents a human-animal encounter and reveals the relationship of survival and death perceptible at Kermajuppo as well as draws attention to the differences in past and current relations towards nature and its denizens.



The artwork could be placed on the lower boarder from boulder coast to forest and therefore be visible when looking at the food storage caches from the platform on top of the boulder coast. The white, dead and twisted trees could be used to create the abstract human and animal forms and give the installation a natural and additional place-specific appearance.

Kermajuppo is a place where the human eye meets the animal eye. Eye to eye with equal parts of this planet. HUMANIMALS.



Seventeen hunting pit remains are located at Kermajuppo however, most of them are hard to find without a trained eye and due to centuries of natural vegetation. A rebuild hunting pit could show visitors their full dimension, construction and function, would leave however, sixteen more to be found. To engage the visitors with Kermajuppo's immediate environment and history, they could help to mark hunting pit locations with self-made nature jewelry. While walking around Kermajuppo, visitors could pick up objects like twigs or cones and create markings which could then be placed next to a pre-marked pit or hanging at a close by tree. Through engaging with Kermajuppo's materials, a sense of its character could be established and while enabled to be part of Kermajuppo's appearance and experience, the visit might become more memorable and unique.

ENGAGING THE VISITORS



RESPECT

Song 9

Holy stone! I bear
copper coin to pay
for forest, lake game:
when I get good luck
I will bring brass rings
Monday before dawn.

At noon I will bring
a bull reindeer horn
for the reindeer catch
and bring a sheep horn
for the forest crone
when good luck is mine.

But if bad luck is
I will gather tops
from nine pitchy trees
burn this holy place
move to another.

If I get good luck
I will give him ten
big stud bull reindeer
and then wild reindeer
to pay for lake game
for beaver and bear
reindeer and foxes
cross-foxes and cats.

When I get all these
I will bring him too
many offerings -
a piece of silver
to pay for lake game
foxes, wolverines
as well, a third part
of a copper coin.

*Honko, L., Timonen, S., Branch, M.
(1993)*

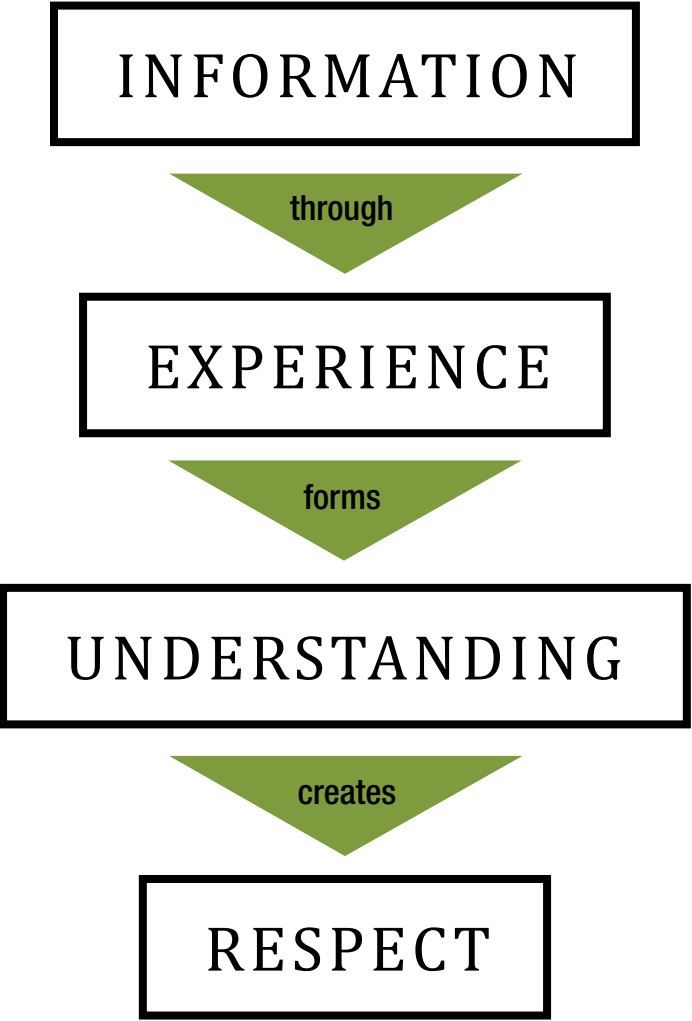




My research study has been about a place, its cultural heritage and how to truthfully and mindfully understand and experience it. I have tried to gather as much information as possible about Kermajuppo and its phenomena through the methods of place-specific art. With all the gathered information I tried to develop an unique experience around and about Kermajuppo that will benefit to

communicate its essence. The Kermajuppo experience is my research resumed in a place proposal. In theory, I wish that through experience, people will start to understand the value behind Kermajuppo, its cultural heritage and nature. An understanding that is deep enough to also create a sense of protection and respect.

Apart from all the ideas I have to support Kermajuppo communicate its magic and inform about its past, I wish for the visitors to become acquainted with the place through their own perceptions and encounters. Personal experiences that support the sensible relationships between human and animal, survival and death, man-made and nature.



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